Why Polygamy

IS

Allowed in Islam

By

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In the Name of Allah,
The All-compassionate, The All-merciful

Praise belongs to Allah, the Lord of all being;
the All-compassionate, the All-merciful;
the Master of the Day of Judgement;
Thee only we serve, and to Thee alone we pray
for succour;
Guide us in the straight path;
the path of those whom Thou hast blessed,
not of those against whom Thou art wrathful,
nor of those who are astray.

O' Allah! send your blessings to the head of
your messengers and the last of
your prophets,
Muhammad and his pure and cleansed progeny.
Also send your blessings to all your
prophets and envoys.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله رب العالمين الرحمن الرحيم
مالك يوم الدين إياك نعبد و إياك نستعين
اهدنا الصراط المستقيم صراط الذين
انعمت عليهم غير المغضوب عليهم
ولا الضالين

اللهم صل على
سيد رسلك وخاتم انبيائك
محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين
وصل على جميع الأنبياء والمرسلين

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Publication Secretary,

World Organization for Islamic Services
(WOFIS)

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Symbol	*Transliteration*
ء	’
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	‘
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ي	y
ة	ah
Long Vowels	
ا	ā
و	ū
ي	ī
Short Vowels	
ـَ	a
ـُ	u
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FOREWORD

Polygamy What a disgusting title apparently it is!

What is particularly amusing is that those very people who accept the evils of permissive society and consider it consistent with civilization find polygamy abhorrent.

These people are fully aware, that it is not possible to establish a law whereby a man can derive full satisfaction with one wife. These very people who proclaim maximum love for one woman, have been found to have established illicit sexual affairs with others.

When these people come to know of a faithful Muslim with two wives who enjoy maximum and equal love from their husband,

and who has no illicit sexual relations in his life, they start to redicule the idea of polygamy, citing examples to prove that such a situation is not practicable.

Polygamy is not necessarily practiced to fulfil the sexual urge. The aim of polygamy is to stop the degeneration of society and prevent promiscuity. It ensures maximum fulfilment for both men and women while keeping the society safe and spreading love within the society. Such a society can easily be built when polygamy is allowed.

Polygamy, being a controversial issue requires deep thought and serious debate. Leaving aside the issue of establishing legal polygamy, let us examine the opinion, thought and critism of the Westerners and where they have gone wrong.

This booklet presents the arguments for allowing polygamy in a lucid manner.

WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC SERVICES

(Board of Writing, Translation and Publication)

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the Name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful

INTRODUCTION

Islam has allowed a man to marry more than one wife. This has been done for the purpose of solving many social and domestic problems which a family is confronted with from time to time. Many are the times when the general welfare of both man and woman depends upon the husband marrying another wife.

As Sayyid Saeed Akhtar Rizvi, Chief Mis-

sionary of the Bilal Muslim Mission of Tanzania, wrote in the `Submission to the Commission on the Law of Marriage and Divorce and Matrimonial Status of Women,' which was appointed by the Kenya Government:-

"**Polygamy**: African society was, and to a certain extent is, a polygamous society. Islam also permits polygamy. It has allowed four wives at a time and has enjoined equailty in treatment of all wives.

"It should be remembered that polygamy is not a compulsory thing nor is it advocated. It is just a permission with certain limitation and conditions. And in some of the circumstances this permission proves extremely useful.

"For example: If the wife is chronically ill, or is barren, or for some other reasons it is not desirable for the couple to live as husband and wife. The remedy offered by certain societies is

to divorce the wife and remarry. But is this justice? Is it kind or noble to turn out a woman in her old or middle age from her home, just because she remains sick or she happens to be barren? Islam discourages such cruelty by permitting polygamy." *(The Light,* vol.1, nos.ll-12)

Unfortunately, the West, and particularly the Christian church leaders, have used this permission of polygamy for criticizing Islam. Their motive seems just to oppose Islam, hoping thereby to hamper its progress, by degrading it in the eyes of the world.

In their propaganda against this permission, the critics present the following arguments:-

a) that marrying more than one wife is against the natural law;

b) that this permission encourages lust and sensuality, which is detrimental

to the family well-being;

c) that the system of polygamy has social disadvantages, injures the delicate feelings of women; causes deep frustrations and disappointments, giving rise to the feeling of hate and hatred which upsets the proper bringing-up of children;

d) that this lam disturbs the family-planning, as plurality of wives naturally increases the number of children; this in its turn causes economic problems.

Before commenting on these objections, let us first examine whether it was Islam which originally promulgated the system of polygamy, or it existed since pre-historic days. Also let us see whether it is found in other religions. Then we should see on what grounds and with what conditions has Islam allowed a man to marry more than one wife. Does it offer solutions

to the social problems facing many countries today?

POLYGAMY: AN ANCIENT INSTITUTION

S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali writes:-

"Polygamy was prevalent among all the nations of antiquity, not excluding the Hindus and Budhists. The world in general and Arabia in particular before the ministry of the Holy Prophet was lying deeply buried under gross licentiousness and depravity. Which historic fact no educated one among us can ever contradict, particularly about the private life of the rulers of the states. The great king Dasarata, the father of Sri Rama, was polygamous. The Christian Monarchs of Europe could not help themselves against having wives more than one. Henry the VIII of England had' as many as eight wives.

Even the great Apostles of God like Abraham, Solomon and the others had wives more than one." (Translation of the Holy Qur'an, foot-note no.499)

POLYGAMY: ACCORDING TO HINDU LAW

Further he writes:-

"There is a good deal of controversy as to whether polygamy is sanctioned by Hindu Law. According to Mann the Law on the subject is as follows:-

a) "For the first marriage of twice-born men (wives) of equal caste are recom-mended, but for those who through desire proceed (to marry again) the following females, (chosen) according

to the (direct) order (of the castes) are most approved." (Here follows the list of women who may be approved of). *(Manu, iii 12)*

A) "If twice-born men wed women of their own and of other (lower castes), the seniority, honour, and habitation of those (wives) must be (settled) according to the order of the castes (Varna)." *(Manu, ix 85)*

c) "If, after one damsel has been shown, another be given to the bridegroom, `he may marry them both" for the same price that Manu ordained." *(Manu, viii 204)*

d) "Among all (twice-born men) the wife of equal caste alone (not a wife of a different caste by any means), shall personally attend her husband and assist him in his daily sacred rites." *(Manu,*

ix 86)

e) "But he who foolishly causes that (duty) to be performed by another while his wife of equal caste is alive, is declared by the ancients (to be) as (despicable) as a Kandala (spring from the) Brahamana caste." *(Manu, ix 87)*

"The above quotations clearly indicate that Manu sanctioned polygamy, `and it is now quite settled in the Courts of British India that a Hindu is absolutely without restriction as to the number of his wives, any one may marry again without his wife's consent, or any justification, except his own wish." (Mayne, On *Hindu Law and Usage, p.113)**

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* S. V. Mir Ahmad Ali, Ibid

POLYGAMY: ACCORDING TO JEWISH LAW

In Exodus *(chap.21, ver.10)* it is stated:-

"If he take him another wife, her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage shall he not diminish."

It is evident to even a casual reader of Old Testament that not only is polygamy permitted but also practised, and that regulations for that have been stipulated in the scriptures.

POLYGAMY: ACCORDING TO CHRISTIANITY

The Christian writers say that "monogamy

(i.e., marrying one wife only) is the divine ideal. The Creator constituted as a union between one man and one woman *(Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:5; 1 Cor. 6:16)* He preserves the number of males practically equal to the number of females." (*The Westminster Dictionary of Bible,* 1944 edition)

We will talk about this supposed equal numbers of males and females later on. Here I would like to quote from the Bible where God addresses David in the following words:-

"And I gave thee (David) thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the House of Israel and of Judah." *(11 Sam. 12:8)*

How is it that God Himself gave him his `master's wives' if His intention was to keep the `one man with one woman' rule. Even in the seventh generation after Adam we find that

"Lamech took unto him two wives" *(Gen.* 4:19); Abraham had three wives; Jacob had two wives besides concubines; Moses did not forbid it, instead he brought Laws to regulate it, as has been mentioned in the previous heading.

Christians try to overcome these difficulties implying that the previous prophets had made a mistake in marrying more than one wife. But the insurmountable difficulty faces them in the case of Moses. This is because Moses had brought a Law from God, and if it was God's intention to make marriage a `union between one man and one wife,' Why did 1le give Moses regulations about polygamy? The above-mentioned Dictionary of Bible tries to gloss over this difficulty by saying, "Moses, who was correcting abuses, not suddenly abolishing them, did not forbid polygamy, but discouraged it."

It is a claim which cannot be justified, because Moses himself married two wives: one.

was Zipporah, daughter of Jethro (known in Islamic language as Shu'ayb), the other was a Cushite woman whom Moses married in the second year of the sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. (Num. 12:1)

There is no mention anywhere in the scriptures or any other writing that Zipporah was not alive at that time.

So far about Moses and the Prophets before him. Now we come to the prophets who came after this supposed `discouraging.' We find that polygamy continued to be practised even after the time of Moses, as by Gideon, Elkanah, Saul, Rehoboam and countless others. For the details, see *Judge. 8:30; I Sam. 1:2; II Sam. 12:8; 21:8.*

Prophet "David took him more euncubines and wives out of Jerusalem." (*II Sam. 5:13*). Prophet Solomon "had seven hundred wives,

princesses and three hundred concubines." (I Kings, 11:3)

Now we come to the period after the ministry of Jesus Christ. S.V. Mir Ahmad Ali writes in his translation of the Holy Qur'an:-

"It has often been asserted that Christianity interdicted polygamy, and made monogamy obligatory on all. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

"Ameer Ali, speaking of the general prevalence of polygamy among all nations, remarks:-

'And so it was understood by the leaders of Christendom at various times that there is no intrinsic immorality or sinfulness in plurality of wives. One of the greatest fathers of the Christian Church (St. Augustine) has declared that polygamy is not a crime where it is a legal institution of a country, and the German reformers, even as

late as the sixteenth century, allowed and declared valid the taking of a second or even a third wife, contemporaneously with the first, in default of issue, or any other cause.' (Ameer Ali, *Life and Teachings of Mohammad, p.220;* and *Mohamedan Law*, vol.1I, p.23)

'When Christianity made its appearance in Rome, history shows that polygamy was recognised and the early Christian Emperors seem to have admitted its validity.' Says Ameer Ali: -

'The Emperor Valentiniah II, by an Edict, allowed all the subjects of the Empire, if they pleased, to marry several wives; nor does it appear from the ecclesiastical history of those times that the Bishops and the heads of the Christian churches made any objection to this law. Far from it, all the succeeding Emperors practised polygamy, and the people generally were not remiss in following their example.

Even the clergy often had wives. This state of the laws continued until the time of Justinian, who ... resulted in their embodiment in the celebrated laws of Justinian. `But these laws owed little to Christianity, at least directly.' The greatest adviser of Justinian was an atheist and a pagan. Even prohibition of polygamy by Justinian failed to check the tendency of the age.' " (Ameer Ali, *Life and Teachings of Mohammad*, pp.222-223) *

It should be mentioned here that Justinian was in the thirteenth century of Christian era, it means that up to thirteenth century there was no prohibition of polygamy in Christianity, at all.

The following paragraphs from An Apology for *Mohammed and the Koran* (by John Davenport) show clearly that polygamy was not frowned upon by the Christian leaders up to

* S.V. Mir Ahmed Ali, Foot-Note no.499.

at least the sixteenth century:-

"St. Chrysostom, speaking of Abraham and Hagar, says, `These things were not then forbidden.' So St. Augustine observes that `there was a *blamesless* custom of one man having many wives, which at that time might be done in a way of *duty*, which now cannot be done but from licentiousness, because, for the sake of multiplying posterity, no *law forbad a plurality of wives.*

"Boniface, Confessor of Lower Germany, having consulted Pope Gregory, in the year 726, in order to know in what cases a husband might be allowed to have two wives, Gregory replied, on the 22nd November of the same year, in these words - `If a wife be attacked by a malady which renders her unfit for conjugal intercourse,

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* (See Grotius, De Jure, vol.i, p.268, note).

the husband may marry another, but in that case he must allow his sick wife all necessary support and assistance.'

"Many works have been published in defence of polygamy even by writers professing Christianity. Bernardo Ochinus, General of the Order of Capuchins, published, about the middle of the sixteenth century, dialogues in favour of the practice, and about the same time appeared a treatise on behalf of a plurality of wives; the author, whose real name was Lysarus, having assumed the pseudo one of Theophilus Aleuthes.

"Selden proves, in his `Uxor Hebraica,' that polygamy was allowed not only among the Jews, but likewise arnong all other nations.

"But the most distinguished defender of polygamy was the celebrated John Milton, who, in his *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*, (p.237

et seq.) after quoting various passages from the Bible in defence of the practice, says, `Moreover, God, in an allegorical fiction *(Ezekiel, xxiii)*, represents Himself as having espoused two wives, Aholah and Aholiah, a mode of speaking which Jehavoh would by no means have employed, especially at such length even in a parable, nor, indeed, have taken upon himself such a character at all, if the practice which it implied had been intrinsically dishonourable or shameful.'

"On what grounds, then, can a practice be considered as so dishonourable or shameful which is prohibited to no one even under the Gospel; for that dispensation annuls none of the merely civil regulations which existed previously to its introduction ...

"Lastly, I argue as follows, from Hebrews, xiii. v.4:- Polygamy is either marriage, fornication or adultery. The Apostle recognises no fourth state. Reverence for so many patriarchs

who were polygamists will, I trust, deter every one from considering it as fornication or adultery, for *`wheremongers and adulterers God will judge,'* whereas the patriarchs were the objects of his especial favour, as he himself witnesses. If, then, polygamy be marriage properly so called, it is also lawful and honourable: according to the same Apostle., *`marriage is honourable in all and the bed underfiled.' " (An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran,* pp.157-159)

John Milton has earlier written in the same book (*A Treatise On Christian Doctrine) as* follows:-

"In the definition which I have given (i.e. of marriage) I have not said, in compliance with the common opinion, `of one man with one woman,' lest I should by implication charge the holy patriarchs and pillars of our faith, Abraham, and the others who had more than one wife at the same titnc, with habitual fornicahon and

adultery, lest I should be forced to exclude from the sanctuary of God as spurious the holy offspring which sprang from them, yea, the whole of the sons of Israel, for whom the sanctuary itself was made. For it is said (Deut. 23:2): `A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of Jehovah, even to his tenth generation.' Either, therefore, polygamy is a true marriage or all children born in that state are spurious; which would include the whole race of Jacob, the twelve holy tribes chosen by God. But as such an assertion would be absurd in the extreme, not to say impious, and as it is the height of injustice, as well as an example of most dangerous tendency in religion, `to account as sin what is not such in reality,' it appears true that, so far from the question respecting the lawfulness of polygamy being trivial, it is of the highest importance that it should be decided." (pp.231-232)

POLYGAMY IN ISLAM

First of all, it should be remembered that the Hindus, Babylonians, Persians, Athenians, Jews and pre-Islamic Arabs recognised no limit to the number of wives a man could marry. Islam limited and restricted it in number; and hedged it with severe restrictions.

The attitude of a husband towards his wives must be such as to give no occasion to heart-break, jealousy, dissatisfaction, discontent and frustration to any of them. There should be no cruelty, injustice, bias or partiality on the part of the husband. It is expected and seen that complete peace, harmony and tranquillity prevail in the household where the husband faithfully observes the injunctions of Islam regarding the equal status of all the wives in matters of maintenance, and general treatment.

If the husband cannot exercise this equality he is not allowed to marry more than one. Regarding this restriction of number and equal treatment, the Qur'an, ordains:-

. . . فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُم مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ
وَثُلَاثَ وَرُبَاعَ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا
فَوَاحِدَةً . . . (النساء : ٣)

. . . , *then marry such women as seem good to you, two, three and four; but if you fear you will not be equitable, then only one,* . . . " (Qur'an, *4:3)*

To ensure that fairness and justice, the husband must have sufficient economic means to provide adequate food, clothing and other necessities of life to each of them; each of the wives must be provided with a separate house of her own, where only the husband has a right to

enter without asking her permission first. The husband must spend equal time in the house of each wife. He must divide his nights among them, and must visit every wife in the morning. This will give him a chance to look after the welfare of each every day, and will maintain good relationships with each of them.

The fact that the imposition of the above conditions has made polygamy very much restricted among the Muslims; and one seldom comes across cases of polygamy in the Muslim societies.

POLYGAMY: A NATURAL LAW

Now, we should look at the arguments of the Christians against the system of polygamy. Is polygamy really against the natural law?

The facts and findings answer this question in negative.

"Man," says G.R.Scott, "is essentially polygamous and the development of civilization extends this innate polygamy." *(History of prostitution, p.21;* as quoted in *Polygamy in Islam*, published by Islami Mission, Lahore)

Dr. Mercier says: "Woman is by nature monogamist; man has in him the element of polygamist." *(Conduct and its Disorders Biologically Considered,* pp.292-293; as quoted in *Polygamy in Islam)*

Professor Russel, an American scholar, said in a conference, held at the University of California, convened to discuss the Family Rights:-

"Marriage to one wife and being tied down to only one wife for the whole span of life is unnatural and unreasonable." Then, in the course

of a long discussion, he summarized his theory by saying that, "Man aught to accept the law of more than one wife as an important factor in the struggle for survival." (Ittila'at), Tehran, no.3104)

While on this topic, we should examine the claim that the Creator "preserves the number of males practically equal to the number of females."

It is a claim which cannot be justified in any way. There are a number of countries, including Tanzania, where the population of women exceeds considerably that of men. According to statistics published some time ago, in Soviet Russia, the population of women was about twenty one million more than that of the men.

And even if we accept, just for the sake of argument, that the Creator creates equal

number of males and females, does it prove that there will be no need of polygamy? Well, let us look at this matter in a reasoned way. The girls become capable of re-production, and get the natural sexual feelings earlier than the boys. Islam has fixed the age of nine years for a girl to be considered as an adult, while the age limit for boys is fourteen or fifteen. It is because in temperate climate girls are able to conceive at the age of nine or ten; while in the same climate an average boy becomes able to establish sexual intercourse at the age of about fourteen or fifteen.

Now, suppose a group of people settle together in a place, and suppose that every year fifty boys and fifty girls are born in that community. Also suppose that none of the children die in infancy. In twenty years, there will be one thousand boys and one thousand girls.

Out of these one thousand girls, five hundred and fifty girls (who were born from the first to the eleventh year) will have reached the age of puberty, that is, will be from ten to twenty years old.

And out of the one thousand boys only three hundred will have reached the age of puberty. These will be the ones born from first year to the sixth year, who will be from fifteen to twenty years old.

If that community practices monogamy, the three hundred boys can marry three hundred girls. What will be the fate of the remaining two hundred and fifty girls? So, the supposed equality in number of boys and girls is wrong not only according to the statistics, but in theory also.

Also, one more fact to be borne in mind, before claiming this equality of the numbers.

All healthy women have to pass through a period, every month, when their condition discourages establishment of sexual intercourse. But the man does not lose his sexual urge at any time. What is the remedy if a man is unable to resist his sexual urge at a time when his wife is having her menstruation? Either polygamy, which has legal status, or going to the prostitutes, which is forbidden in every religion.

Apart from these natural causes which refute the claim of the Christian priests, there are some situations created by man which give lie to that claim. Take for example **War**. In Europe, during the thirty-year War and in the last two World Wars, so many men were killed that there were not enough males to marry the young girls and young widows. In West Germany alone, after the second World War, there were six million women who could not find a husband. A group of them appealed to the government to promulgate a law allowing polygamy, so that

they may get husbands. They pleaded their case on the grounds that it would provide them economic and social security and satisfy their natural urge. The Church opposed this move, and the helpless six million women were left to fend for themselves by illicit sexual activities.

Bertrand Russell says:-

"And in all countries where there is an excess of women, it is an obvious injustice that those women who by arithmetical necessity must remain unmarried should be wholly debarred from sexual experience." *(Marriage and Morals,* p.47)

DOES POLYGAMY ENCOURAGE SENSUALITY?

The above quotation has brought us to the

next objection of the Christian priests, that polygamy encourages lust and sensuality. We have already shown by arithmetical calculations and historical facts that the system of monogamy has compelled and is compelling millions and millions of unfortunate girls to live immoral life, and these writers still have the cheek to tell us that polygamy (which is the only cure to this malady) leads to sensuality!

The following paragraphs, taken from Polygamy in Islam, give us a fair picture of Western monogamy:-

"Islam allows its followers legal marriage in addition to the first one and, having allowed fullest possible legitimate outlet to the sex impulse, it prescribes very severe and deterent punishment for adultery, because adultery destroys peace, harmony, tranquillity prevailing in homes, throws doubt on the fatherhood of children and legitimacy of inheritance, and

ultimately results in broken homes, ruined families and dissolutions of marriages.

"In Europe and America, it is just the other way about, and they have solved the problem of sexual outlet in a peculiar way. They have allowed women full and free inter-mixing with strangers of opposite sex in the name of so-called emancipation of women, and this has resulted in over-increasing cases of fornication and adultery. Bertrand Russell says, `With the growth of women's freedom there has come a much greater opportunity for conjugal infidelity than existed in former times. The opportunity gives rise to the thought; the thought gives rise to the desire and in the absence of religious scruples, the desire gives rise to the act.'(*Marriage and Morals, p.72)*

"The result is that the men and women born during the present century is the so-called civilized Europe and America do not believe that fornication and extra-martial relations as

such are a sin. There is neither internal nor external control in matters of sex. Conjugal fidelity is not expected now-a-days. The sexual revolution is in full swing.

"Of course, polygamy is considered an infringement of the rights of women, but practically these monogamists go on practising surrep titious, clandestine and underhand polygamy by defiling secretly the wives, daughters and sisters of other people. Polygamy is considered an evil but left-handed wives are kept without any scruples. No eye-brows are lifted on sexual promiscuity. Enticement is provided by semi-nude dresses, freedom of intermixing with strangers of opposite sex, posters showing nude women, sex symbols, sex-insinuating material and obscenity in cinemas where physical contours move in synchronisation with seductive and vulgar music." (pp.9-11)

Mrs. Annie Besant worte on this subject:-

"There is pretended monogamy in the West, but there is real polygamy without responsibility. The mistress is cast off when the man is weary of her and she sinks gradually to be the woman of the street: for the first lover has no responsibility for her future: and she is hundred times worse off than a sheltered wife and the mother in the polygamous home. When we see thousands of miserable women, who crowd the streets of Western towns during the night, we must surely feel that it does not lie in Western mouths to reproach Islam for its polygamy. It is better for a woman, happier for a woman, more respectable for a woman to live in Islamic polygamy united to one man only with the legitimate child in her arms and surrounded with respect, than to be seduced, cast out in the streets perhaps with an illegitimate child, outside the pale of law, un-sheltered and uncared for, to become a victim of any passerby, night after night, rendered incapable of motherhood, despised by all."

George Bernard Shaw advised the people of Europe to adopt the system of polygamy to save Europe from inundation of adultery.

Another Western writer, J.E. McFarlance, writes in his *The Case for Polygamy or The Case Against the System of Monogamous Marriage:-*

"Whether the question is considered socially, ethically or religiously; it can be demonstrated that polygamy is not contrary to the highest standards of civilization. The suggestion offers a practical remedy for the Western problems to destitute families; the alternative is continued and increased prostitution, concubinage and distressing spinsterhood."

A Bishop from lbadan (Nigeria), Rev. Odotula, in a religious conference held in Toronto, shed another light on this subject. He said: "The West by prohibiting; the law of (polygamy)

act with hypocrisy, as by frequent divorces they have in fact been practising this custom."

And that Bishop is not alone. Even as early as last century the Christian clergy had realized that Islamic polygamy is infinitely better than the Western monogamy. Rev. Canon Issac Taylor, LL. D. speaking on `Mohamedanism' at the Church congress at Wolverhampton, on 7th October, 1887, said:-

"Owing to polygamy, Muslim countries are free from professional out-casts, a greater reproach to Christendom than polygamy is to Islam. The strictly regulated polygamy of Muslim lands is infinitely less degrading to women and less injurious to men than the promiscuous polyandry which is the curse of Christian cities, and which is absolutely unknown in Islam." *(The Times,* London, Saturday, 8th Oct., 1887)

And recently, such a personality as

Dr. Billy Graham said:-

"Christianity cannot but compromise on the question of polygamy. If present day Christianity cannot do so, it is to its own detriment. Islam has permitted polygamy as a solution to social ills, and has allowed a certain degree of latitude to human nature but only within the strictly defined framework of law. Christian countries make a great show of monogamy, but actually they practice polygamy. No one is unaware of the part mistresses play in Western society. In this respect Islam is a fundamentally honest religion, and permits a Muslim to marry a second wife if he must be strictly forbidden all clandestine amatory associations in order to safeguard the moral policy of the community." (quoted in The Position of Woman in Islam, published by the Islamic Foundation, Karachi)

DOES POLYGAMY INJURE THE FEELINGS OF WOMEN?

The third objection is that polygamy has social disadvantages, and injures the delicate feelings of women. We have already seen that far from creating social disadvantages, polygamy cures the social disadvantages, and that it is the pretended monogamy which is the root-cause of the vast array of the social abuses in the Western countries. Now, we may briefly explain the subject of the supposed injury to the delicate feelings of the women. One wonders if the prevalent permissiveness of the Christian countries does not injure the delicate feelings of the wives who see their husbands flirting with all types of `emancipated' women.

So far as Islamic societies are concerned. the instances are not uncommon, where a wife

herself persuades the husband to marry a second wife. Often, she herself chooses the bride-to-be. The writings of Westerners do not carry any weight on this subject, because they do not live in a Muslim society, and whatever they write is based on mere presumption and imagination. If there is to be any discussion on this subject, it must be based on the data gathered from Islamic societies.

According to the *Ittila'at* (daily), Tehran, (no.13114), "A man with his three wives approached the Matrimonial Tribunal to seek their permission to marry a fourth wife. All three existing wives recommended and approved the intended marriage. The reporter of *Ittila'at* approached the mother of the wife-to-be, to investigate the background of this incident. He learnt that in that village there were 2000 women compared to 400 males (half of them still below fourteen years of age). The would-be mother-in-law preferred to give her daughter

to a man already having three wives to the alternative of keeping her unmarried for the rest of her life."

The same paper (no.13075) published the following news:-

"A young wife who did not bear children and, as a result, was very much distressed, approached the Matrimonial Tribunal and asked them to persuade her husband to take a second wife. `Do not think that I do not love my husband, or that there is no accord between us. On the contrary, because of my deep love to him, I do not want him to remain without child, due to no fault of his own. I have tried to persuade him to marry another wife, but he does not agree. Therefore, I request this Tribunal to intervene. I solemnly pledge to live in harmony and with co-operation with the second wife.' "

The same newspaper (no.13091) reported

another woman saying:-

"Some years ago, my husband married me so that the two sons of his late brother do not remain without a guardian. Later we had a child of our own, but he died after one month only. My husband is younger than me; and I resolved to find for him a younger wife. Now I have succeeded in getting him married to another girl."

These are a few examples to show that polygamy does not injure the feeling of the wives. Of course, there are instances of discord and disputes in a polygamous household. But they are neither more nor less than the discords and disputes in a monogamous household. Will the Western writers suggest to abolish the institution of `Marriage' because it creates domestic troubles, disputes and discords, which sometimes result in divorce?

POLYGAMY VS. FAMILY PLANNING

This objection is based on short-sightedness. In Islam, the husband is responsible to maintain his wife or wives and all his children. It is an obligation which must be fulfilled in all circumstances. If a husband follows the tenets of Islam, he is bound to think twice before entering a new marriage whether he would be able to meet his financial and other obligations concerning the new wife and her off-spring. If his financial condition is not strong, he has to refrain from the new marriage. Therefore, the question of `economic problems' does not arise at all.

Thus, in the words of John Davenport:-

"Mohammed, therefore, did but legalize a practice not only honoured but even blessed

by God himself, under the old dispensation, and declared to be lawful and honourable under the new one; and, consequently, he must be exonerated from the charge of having sanctioned polygamy, and thereby encouraged licentiousness." *(An Apology for Mohammed and the Koran* p.159)

Before ending this booklet, I would like to quote here a letter written by an African Mr. S.M. Werottere of Karatina (Kenya) which was published in the *Sunday Post* (Nairobi) of 19th August, 1973. He writes:-

"POLYGAMY OR PROSTITUTION?"

"IN A SURVEY to find out the cause of the increase of prostitution and continued marriage breakages in Nyeri District, I have discovered various reasons. But one that caught my attention is that women out-numbered men.

"It will be interesting to note that except in very few families, girls are more than boys in most cases; 5-3, 4-3, 2-l, 6-2, 4-1 and so on. These figures indicate that women are, roughly, two thirds of the country's population.

"Normally, it is a boy that approaches a girl when he considers it fit to marry her; a girl simply waits to be consulted by anyone who may be interested in her.

"It is a common belief, especially in Christian circles, that the system of `one man, one wife' should be maintained. That would mean that `one half' of girls would never be married. The Church has remained mute as to where the half of the girl population should go.

"The Church teaches that the Bible directs a man should have, one wife. Yet we know of some holy men in the Bible that were poly gamous. There seems to exist some contradic-

tions, anyway.

"Indeed, people appreciate present Government efforts to control human population by introducing Family Planning services; they com mend some religious institutions, for example Muhammedans, who allow polygamy to their followers.

"Through experience, we now know that although the system of `one man, one wife'. is aimed at having peaceful families, a good many families in this category have not justified the situation. Some have even divorced or are separated.

"We cannot deny that `one half of the girls' (or even more) are without husbands. We have not been able to direct them on how to face life - especially as we arc already aware that life is too brutal to them. Particularly when the majority of young girls lack skills to enable

them earn a living.

"The Church priests, the peasants, the economists, the administrators and others quietly admit that the unmarried women should struggle to survive even if it is by prostitution, perhaps (?). `It is time,' one man told me, `that the Christian churches examined the present state of affairs and relax the `one man, one wife' rule to help save the situation now facing the world.'

"And one Christian woman told me: `I won't mind being a second wife of a man I love. Life becomes hopeless when a woman doesn't have a man's protection. It is better than remaining unmarried.'

"Said a known prostitute: `When I got my baby boy and took five years without getting married, day to day problems pushed me towards prostitution. I have no choice; I can be second or third wife if consulted. Life has been very

insecure.'

"One Christian minister told me that although he agreed that polygamy would reduce prostitution to a certain degree, he does not believe that it would serve the situation fully. He maintains further that with family planning, the problem would be saved in future. He had no answer as to what would be done to the problem at present.

"In general, the majority of the people I have talked to - married or not - want the Church to reconsider its stand so that people can be free to choose between polygamy and monogamy, depending on one's wealth." *(Sunday Post, Nairobi)*

And with this quotation, I close this booklet, hoping that the readers will fully appreciate the benefits of the Islamic permissidn of polygamy.

THE END